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SURVEY ON

LABOR NEEDS ON DAIRY FARMS

IN

NEW YORK, CONNECTICUT AND VERMONT

DURING THE SPRING OF 1942

Prepared by

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
Washington

To: N. Gregory Silvermaster, Director, Labor Division
From: Samuel Liss, Senior Economist, Labor Division
Subject: Survey on Labor Needs on Dairy Farms in New York,
Connecticut and Vermont During the Spring of 1942.

Herewith is submitted a report on the above subject based on a field survey conducted by Robert M. Dinkel of this Division in June 1942. The objective and conduct of the survey is presented by the author in the "Introduction" of the report.

Similar surveys were made by other members of the staff in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Indiana and Illinois. Edgar McVoy reported for the first three of these States and Walter R. Sassaman for the last three. A combined summary report of the three investigators has been also reproduced under the title of "The Labor Problem on Dairy Farms in Several Northeastern and Northcentral States During the 1942 Agricultural Season".

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LABOR NEEDS ON DAIRY FARMS IN NEW YORK, CONNECTICUT, AND VERMONT

I - Introduction

A. Objectives of survey

The Labor Division of the Farm Security Administration received during the Spring of 1942 many reports of a labor shortage on dairy farms. A reconnaissance survey was planned with the following objectives: (1) To obtain basic information on the labor requirements of dairy farms; (2) to determine the extent of a labor shortage, the efforts made to meet whatever difficulties were present, and the success of those efforts; and (3) to devise a plan to alleviate whatever shortages now exist or may exist in the near future.

B. Criteria in selecting counties for survey

Madison and St. Lawrence in New York, Chittenden in Vermont, and Litchfield in Connecticut were the counties chosen for a field visit. They were chosen, because they are among the top milk producers in the State in which located, they hire many year-round workers, they contain mainly specialized dairy farms, and no evidence was found that they are atypical in their labor problems.

1. Milk production

One index of their importance as milk producers is the number of gallons of whole milk sold in 1939. The data show 14 million gallons for Chittenden and for Litchfield, 23 million for Madison, and 48 million for St. Lawrence. These differences are largely accounted for by the number of farms reporting in each. St. Lawrence is of very large area and

had from two to four times as many farms reporting data on gallons of milk sold as the other counties. Madison, while relatively small in size, had half as many farms reporting these data as did Chittenden and Litchfield.

Table 1

Number of Gallons of Whole Milk Sold 1939*

County and State	Gallons of Whole Milk	Farms Reporting
Chittenden, Vermont	13,730,000	1,105
Litchfield, Connecticut	14,655,000	1,243
Madison, New York	23,323,000	1,883
St. Lawrence, New York	48,232,000	4,601
<u>TOTAL</u>	99,940,000	8,832

*1940 U. S. Census--Agriculture, First Series, County Table IV.

2. Labor force

The labor force used to produce the milk shown above is composed of family help, including the operator himself, year-round men, and summer and seasonal hands. The length of employment for summer help is usually from three to six months. Seasonal hands are ordinarily hired for a period from two to four weeks.

The number of family and of monthly hired labor working on the farms of the four counties during the week of March 24-30, 1940 is shown in Table 2. Monthly labor at this time of the year is probably in almost all cases year-round labor; that is, while paid by the month the worker is employed on a job that is steady throughout the year. Although the data are given for all farms, they may be assumed to represent the situation on dairy farms since in these counties there is little other farming of any importance.

Table 2

Number of Family and Hired Monthly Help
Working on Farms, March 24-30, 1940,
by County*

County and State	Family Labor		Month Labor	
	Persons	Farms	Persons	Farms
Chittenden, Vermont	2,033	1,275	760	497
Litchfield, Connecticut	3,080	2,156	1,298	754
Madison, New York	3,091	2,045	929	695
St. Lawrence, New York	8,472	5,053	1,600	1,278
<u>TOTAL</u>	16,676	10,529	4,587	3,224

*1940 U.S. Census--Agriculture, Second Series, County
Table X.

The total number of month labor for the four counties for the period given above was about 4,500. The county with the smallest number had 760 while the county with the greatest number had 1,600. These totals in comparison with the number of seasonal hands used in cash crop areas or with the number of factory employees in a city of 100,000 or more population might appear unimpressive. It should be remembered, however, that the comparison with seasonal hands in terms of the number employed during a short period is not a very valid one. Instead, the comparison should be made on the basis of the total number of man months each group works during a 12 month's period. Then the result would be much more favorable to the importance of the dairy hands. It is also true that these workers are skilled, cannot be easily replaced, and are responsible for many millions of gallons of milk in the food supply of the nation.

The number of family and hired ~~month~~ help shown in Table 2 is probably greatly augmented during the months from May to October by the addition of summer and seasonal hands; workers who help with

the ploughing, cultivating, haying, and harvesting of other crops. The Census gives the number of persons hired on a week or day basis during the period from September 24-30, but these data do not reveal the true size of the labor force taken on during the summer months. The Census period is too late in the summer. By that time, many of the extra help have finished their work and have been laid off. It might be true, furthermore, that no one period of a week's time would show accurately the total number of workers used since the time during which the farms of an area reach their peak of work varies from place to place by as much as a month.

The chief emphasis will be given to the problem of year-round men. This type of help, however, cannot be considered separately from that of summer hands. The connection between the two types will be seen in the discussion later on the adjustment of farmers to labor difficulties that have occurred so far and of the measures advocated to meet further problems of this kind. It will be noted that during at least the first stage of a shortage of year-round men, the difficulties can be met by using students and other temporary help to get by the peak work period of the summer and by effecting labor economies during the winter months.

3. Geographical dispersion.

Along with the two foregoing factors in evaluating the appropriateness of the selection, there should be considered the geographical dispersion of the counties. The selected counties are well scattered over the main dairy producing area of the northeastern states. This distribution over a wide territory might be taken to mean that any

problem occurring in all four places is likely to be typical for the whole region of specialized dairy farms.

C. Farms selected for study.

Within each county, approximately 10 farms were selected for case history study. These farms were located in areas of high milk production that were close to the county seat. Such areas were pointed out by local officials as being ones that were typical of the specialized dairy farming in the county and that hired many year-round hands. Within one or more of the small areas so pointed out, the author travelled up and down the main and the sub roads, taking farms for study by a random method of selection. Every few miles of travel, a selection would be made of two or three farms in the order which they appeared. If the place were found to be milking fewer than 15 cows, it was passed up after the initial inquiry and one of its immediate neighbors taken instead. In each county, the cases so selected were scattered geographically over an area that was roughly about 10 miles square. So far as is known, the only bias that might have been present was the taking of too large a proportion of the cases from the farms bordering on the main roads.

D. Method of interviewing farmers and officials.

Data were obtained from 46 farmers. The operator of the farm in all of these cases was the person who gave the information. Questions were asked in an informal, conversational way. Nothing was written down until after the interviewer had left the farm. In this way, it was

possible to get a ready response from the farmer.

Regional, state, and local officials of the Extension Service, the United States Employment Service, the Farm Security Administration, and other public and private groups were also interviewed. About 70 such persons were seen. Verbatim records were made of their answers to the questions asked. In their case, notes were taken during the interview. These persons were very cooperative, willing to give whatever assistance they could to help in the solution of a problem which they all acknowledged to be a serious one in their locality.

PART II

LABOR REQUIREMENTS ON A DAIRY FARM

A. Number of year-round men needed
on dairy farms of various sizes

The number of year-round men needed on a dairy farm depends upon such factors as the size of the herd, the number of acres in field crops, the machines used, the amount of family labor available, the age and health of the operator, and the number of summer and seasonal hands that are hired during the summer. With all of these variables operating in the situation, the observer would probably expect to find great differences among farmers in the number of year-round men they had employed. Such differences were not found among the 46 farms visited. Only five of the 42 farmers who were milking between 15 and 50 cows had more than two year-round men. The other 37 cases had none, one, or two.

The use of labor on the sample farms is shown below according to the number of cows being milked at the time of the interview.

Table 3

Labor Used on Sample Farms
By Size of Herd Being Milked

Number of Cows Being Milked	Total Number of cases	Number Year-Round Men				Number of Cases Had Help From	
		None	One	Two	3 or 4	Boys*	Wife
15-24	22	11	9	1	1	5	11
25-34	7	0	5	0	2	1	0
35-49	13	1	6	4	2	3	5
50-74	3	0	0	1	2	0	0
75 and over	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Total	46	12	20	6	8	10	16

*Sons from 12 to 17 years of age. Older sons helping regularly with the farm work were counted as year-round men.

Sons from 12 to 17 years of age were not counted as year-round help while their older brothers were. The main reason for this distinction is that the younger boys, with a few exceptions, were still attending school. During the winter time, they had only a few hours a day in which they could help with the chores. Even if this group of sons was added to the number of year-round men being used, there would still be 36 of the 42 farmers milking 15 to 49 cows that were using no more than two such regular help.

For farmers having a herd of that size, the question may be asked: At what point does one man and at what point do two men have to be added to the labor force. Consideration of the data of Table 3 indicates that it would be possible for a farmer having up to 25 cows that he was milking to do all the work by himself. During the summer, to be sure, he would probably have to take on a man for a few months to help with such jobs as cultivating corn and haying. If a year-round man were added when the farmer had between 22 and 25 cows, then, the operator and this man could probably carry the essential work in barn and field until the size of the herd reached about 40 or 45 cows; that is, cows that were being milked. Between 45 and 50 cows, a second year-round man would have to be added. Besides doing all the barn work, the combination of operator and one year-round man might be able to do all the field work with the exception of that occurring during two or three weeks of the summer's peak. These conclusions are drawn with the assumption that the operator had the use of a milker and other machines, such as a hay loader, that are commonly found on the larger farms of the area.

Our estimates on the number of year-round hands needed assume that all of the essential work on the farms would be taken care of. If some of this work was neglected, the number of cows that could be handled would increase. For example, in one of the 46 sampled cases, the farmer was milking 44 cows by himself and doing, besides, the great bulk of his field work. He was not, however, stripping his cows as well as he should to keep up his production nor was he getting the hay cut when it was in the best condition.

The number of cows that could be taken care of would have to be decreased if the operator were in old age or ill health or if he did not have the use of a milking machine. That it is probable that a large percentage of the farms in the areas studied that are milking 20 cows or more have this machine was indicated by the fact that 80 per cent of the sample group was found to be using it.

Estimates of the number of year-round men needed on larger farms than those milking up to 50 cows could be roughly estimated by adding an additional person for every 20 to 25 cows above 50. This estimate would be a liberal one, because of increasing efficiency on the larger places of pooled labor and because such places would probably be using more and better equipment. Farms milking 50 or more cows will not be found frequently. In the areas studied, such farms were estimated by local officials to be five per cent or less of the total number.

B Skills needed by year-round dairy hands?

What skills are needed by year-round dairy farm workers? On the answer to this question largely depends the size of the potential supply of workers who could be recruited for work on dairy farms and the type of program that should be instituted in case a shortage exists.

A clue to the answer can be obtained from knowledge of the type of person the farmer has been willing to hire or the type that he is willing to hire at the present time. Two years ago, the farmers visited wanted a man who could milk, who "understood" cows, who knew how to drive a tractor and make simple repairs on machinery, who was a good teamster, and who was willing and able to do a good day's work. At that time these qualifications could be successfully demanded because there was a surplus of labor in the areas. The farmer could well afford to have high standards, knowing he would be able to get the kind of help he wanted when he needed it.

Those conditions have changed considerably and the farmer's requirements have changed with them. In the great majority of cases, the farmer is now satisfied if the man knows how to milk and if he is willing to and able to work hard. There are some cases in which the farmer is willing to hire a man if he is willing and able to work hard. This change in the attitude of the farmer probably would not have taken place unless there were reasonable prospects that even a "green" man could be of material assistance on a dairy farm and could be taught to increase his contribution within a comparatively short time.

Eventually, the question of what kind of help can be used on a dairy farm resolves itself into the question of how the work to be done can be broken down into constituent elements and the degree of skill needed to accomplish each. From these facts would come some idea of the length of time necessary to train an inexperienced hand to the point at which he could perform dairy farm tasks reasonably well.

The first breakdown of the dairy farm jobs could well be into barn and field work. Under barn work would come all the jobs that are directly associated with the milking, feeding, watering, cleaning and breeding of cows. Under field work would come all the jobs that have to do with the planting, cultivating, and harvesting of crops. While other types of work, such as the cutting of wood and the repairing of fence do not fall under either of these two headings, they might be left out of consideration without affecting the problem at hand. If one wishes to consider this work also, it could be grouped under the field jobs. It should be noted that the so-called barn work is the strictly dairy labor while the field work is the general farm work of the type that is found on all farms.

The barn work can be broken down into the component elements of milking, feeding, watering, breeding, calving, and medical care of ill and injured cattle; drawing hay from the loft; cleaning of stalls; disposing of manure; and cleaning of machinery. Although there are some other tasks, the ones enumerated cover most of the work.

The skilled barn work includes caring for ill and injured cows, breeding, calving, feeding, and milking. The degree of skill involved in each is probably a matter of much dispute. Perhaps, only the care of ill and injured cattle could well be called highly skilled. The other jobs are ones that might be taught in several month's time.

Milking and feeding, at least, could be handled by an inexperienced person within a short period of time. A responsible individual might be taught the use of a milking machine in a few days. To milk by hand might take about a month to learn, as indicated by the farm

training course given at the University of Connecticut. Their program called for the training of 13 women who previously had done no farm work within four to six week's time. Besides milking by hand, these women were to be taught other jobs done on a dairy farm. The milking that could be done by a person with such a short training course would not, of course, be as efficient as the operator himself could accomplish. But 100 per cent efficiency is not as imperative when the main purpose is to help the farmer get through an emergency period of labor shortage.

The feeding of cows is a simpler matter. If the inexperienced person were one who could be trusted to follow directions, the operator could write down for each cow the type and amount of feed to be given. As the season changed and feeding changed with it, the farmer could write new directions. The operator might balk at writing down the instructions, because he is accustomed to having experienced help. But to meet an emergency such and similar adjustments would become necessary in the interest of farm maintenance and production.

Breeding cows and calving them do not take much of the total amount of the so-called barn work. Ordinarily, no skilled tasks need to be done during this process. If unusual difficulties did arise, either the farmer himself would have time to take care of them or a veterinarian could be called in to handle the case.

If milking, feeding, breeding, and calving were taken care of in the way suggested above, there would remain the skilled work of caring for ill and injured cattle, or stripping some of the herd by hand, and of taking care of the many matters that constantly arise and that take good judgment. For this work, the operator himself would be available.

He could probably do all of such work that would come from a herd of 50 or more milk cows and still have much time left for field operations.

In doing his field work, he again would find that much of it could be taken care of by relatively inexperienced assistants, freeing his time for supervision and for the repair of machinery and other tasks that take a good deal of skill. The breakdown of field work could be made into the components of ploughing, harrowing, planting, cultivating, cutting and binding of grain, loading, and storing; driving machines; harnessing, using, feeding, and cleaning of horses; and the making of repairs on machinery.

None of these jobs is highly skilled, with the exception of making some repairs on farm machinery. Planting, use of some horses, and a few of the operations in connection with grain harvesting are semi-skilled. The other tasks enumerated could be done by an inexperienced person after a short period of instruction, especially if the farmer were working along and could give some time to supervision.

The real difficulty in getting field work done is not so much obtaining the necessary manpower as it is getting the consent of the farmer to use it the way it could be used. The farmer believes that nobody but himself can do the job as it really should be done or he is afraid that an unsupervised person will be careless and spoil the crop, frighten the team, break the machinery or do other harm that will be expensive. A good deal of this fear and reluctance to use inexperienced help is dispelled when the operator has time to work along with the man and supervise his work. If the operator were able to get some type of help for the barn work and would break down the tasks in the manner suggested, he would have time to supervise the field work and

to do a good part of the job himself.

In general, the answer to the question of "how skilled the help of the farmer has to be in order to get the work done with a reasonable degree of efficiency" is that a large part of the work on a dairy farm could be done by "green" hands or by individuals who have been given up to a month's training. By using this type of labor the operator would have enough of his time released so he could take care of the highly skilled jobs that must be done. On a farm that was milking up to 50 cows, and perhaps even more, there is much evidence to conclude that the only skilled hand need be the operator.

If experienced dairy hands are not available, persons with general farm experience are second best. If the latter cannot be found in sufficient numbers, inexperienced persons able and willing to work hard could be used profitably. A training program of a month would be desirable, but is not essential. Greater farmers' acceptance for the use of semi- or inexperienced dairy labor could and should be achieved by education and demonstration.

PART III

THE YEAR-ROUND LABOR SUPPLY SITUATION IN THE
SPRING OF 1942

A second major objective of the reconnaissance was to determine to what extent a shortage of year-round dairy help existed on the farms of the northeastern States, what efforts were being made to overcome any difficulties in getting the desired labor, the success of those efforts, and the changes in the labor supply that were expected to take place within the next year.

A Findings

No generally acute shortage of year-round help on dairy farms existed at the time (Spring of 1942) in the counties that were visited. Some farmers have had difficulty in getting the number and type of help they desired and in a small percentage of cases there has been a real hardship as a result of not obtaining necessary help. The following evidence supports the conclusion that an acute shortage did not exist at the time of the survey.

1. The number of milk cows and the volume of milk production was greater in the first five months of 1942 than in the corresponding period a year ago. In fact, current production is greater than any time for the past several years. These increases are general throughout the counties of the States visited. They average from two to 10 per cent in almost every county of the three States.

2. The 46 farmers interviewed had, as a group, only one less year-round worker than they had last year at the same time. They had a total of 64 a year ago and 63 at the time of interview. From an analysis of their use of labor, it appeared that in only four of the 46 cases was

there genuine difficulty in getting the work done with the available help.

3. The Employment Service had been able to make replacements of experienced help on dairy farms during the past year. The Burlington, Vermont, office from May 25th to June 25th of this year (1942), placed six married men, 11 single men, and 18 boys 14 years of age and over. The Hartford, Connecticut, office placed on dairy farms during the first five months of the past three years 140, 116, and 121 persons. Placements seem to be equally numerous in the Oneida and Ogdensburg offices in New York State. Such a number of persons placed indicates that the supply of experienced persons is by no means exhausted. Since the recruiting efforts of local Employment Service offices are usually not vigorous, there is the suggestion, furthermore, that the shortage as yet has not been severe.

4. The farmers interviewed were able to make numerous replacements by themselves without having recourse to the Employment Service. During the past 12 months, the 46 operators lost 43 year-round hands and were able to hire 42 to take their place. It does not seem that the kind of recruiting usually done by farmers would yield this high degree of replacement if there were a severe shortage.

5. Some of the farmers interviewed were unwilling to take any but experienced help. Such an attitude would probably not exist if there were a general emergency need for workers.

6. On at least one-third of the farms visited there was less than full utilization of the labor available. In a few of these cases, the operator himself contributed only a part of a full day's work

during the busy season. In other cases, the number of hired help was without question greater than that needed to carry on the operations. One farmer in Litchfield county, Connecticut, for example, had 22 cows that he was milking, 45 acres of hay, 8 acres of corn, 12 acres of oats, and about 17 other animals on the farm. For this set-up, he had four year-round workers. He probably could get by with half that number.

7. Local Draft Boards, in almost all of the counties of the States visited, have been very liberal in granting deferments to workers on farms. Almost anyone for whom there is a definite need on the farm on which he is employed has been able to get a deferment on request. During March 1942, for example, there were in New York State 1,685 requests for deferment from persons engaged in farming as operators or as hired workers. Of these cases, 1,652 were granted their request.

8. Although the flow of farm labor into industrial plants has been very heavy, it has showed some signs lately of slowing down. A trickle of workers back to farms from plant work has begun and may increase. The Hartford, Connecticut, Employment Service office has had within the last six months 20 applications for farm work from persons employed in defense industry who wished to get back to their usual occupation. In St. Lawrence county, New York, farmers have been returning to their farm work because prices are high in Massena where they have been employed for the most part, because they have to work the afternoon or night shift, and because they have to commute 20 to 40 miles.

9. Some of the best informed local people are of the opinion that a severe shortage does not exist, as yet, in their counties. This

group is in the minority, but it includes persons who have the closest contact with farm conditions and who have made studies of the labor supply.

While there seemed to be no general or severe shortage of year-round workers on the dairy farms of the counties visited, there was evidence that some difficulties had been met in obtaining all the labor desired and that some farmers were having genuine trouble and hardship in getting work done that was necessary to continued operations of their farm. These difficulties suggest that the surplus of labor which has existed during the past 10 years or more has largely been absorbed and that the usual methods of recruitment do not yield the help needed. This stage in the process of more complete utilization of the labor resources of a locality might be described as the beginning of a shortage or as a minor degree of shortage. Evidence that this stage has been reached in the counties visited is presented below.

1. Some auctions have been held because the farmer could not get the labor he desired. In this connection, it is difficult to estimate to what extent these sales are greater than those which would have taken place in more normal times. Some of these sales have been made by farm owners and operators who are over 60 years of age and who were approaching the time when they would have retired from active farm life. The difficulty of getting all the help they desired might have speeded up the time of their retirement by a few years at the most. It should also be realized that the cows sold have often gone to other farmers in the county and thus do not represent a reduction in either the cow population or milk production. Besides the sales that have actually

taken place, many farmers threatened to sell out if their difficulties continue. A common statement is that they do not have to work as hard as they are working and rather than continue to do so in their advancing years they would rather get rid of their herd and take life easy. Some of these threats are genuine statements of intention, but in many instances the farmer will find it much harder than he imagines to give up the work he has done for many years. In other cases, the threat is merely a way of grumbling about an uncomfortable situation.

2. Wages have increased substantially during the past two years. Besides perquisites, the cash wages for an experienced married hand were reported by local officials to be as follows: (1) Two years ago, \$30 to \$40 a month; (2) one year ago, about \$45 to \$60 a month; (3) at the present time, between \$75 and \$125 a month. When reporting current wages, officials are likely to give the highest amount that a good man could obtain if he knew how to bargain with the farmers who were in need of help and who were best able to pay high wages. Their estimates, therefore, frequently are not the average or typical wage being paid in their locality. This fact was shown by the data on the wages being paid by the 46 farmers who were interviewed. The median wage for 23 married hands was \$70 and for 27 single hands was \$60. However, it will be noted that even these wages are about twice as high as was being paid two years ago. Such an increase would probably not have taken place unless the farmers had had genuine difficulty in retaining the workers they had and in securing additional necessary help.

3. Among the farmers interviewed, there were 10 who were working unusually long hours even for dairy operators and longer hours than they had been accustomed to working during the past few years. Other cases were found in which the wife or daughter had recently been asked to give assistance during peak work periods that had been normally met by hiring outside help. That these cases represent a bona fide need for hired help was indicated by the willingness of the farmer to employ immediately one or more men at wages ranging from \$60 to \$125 a month.

4. Many farm youth and experienced farm hands have recently accepted industrial jobs. (a) Persons in Madison county, New York, have been attracted to jobs at the Rome and Syracuse airports or to jobs at the General Electric and at the TNT plants at Fulton on the other side of Lake Oneida. A check of 504 occupational questionnaires in the Employment Service office at Oneida showed 222 cases in the ages 20, 21, and 35 to 44 that came from a farm background. Forty-four per cent of these cases were employed in non-farm work at the time of filling out the questionnaire. Twenty per cent of the group had left farm work within the past two years. (b) Persons in St. Lawrence county, New York, have left farm work for employment by Alcoa in Massena, to help with the construction of a power line put through the county in the spring and early summer of 1942, and to accept jobs in Syracuse and other lower New York cities. Alcoa normally had about 3,200 employees. It now has about 5,200. The power line employed about 600 individuals. The Ogdensburg Employment Service office has placed about 800 men in down-state jobs and estimates their participation in this movement as about one-third of the total. (c) Chittenden county, Vermont, men have gone

for the most part either to Springfield, Massachusetts or to Hartford, Connecticut. A sample check in the Employment Service office at Burlington of the occupational questionnaires of boys born from 1916 to 1921 showed about 65 per cent came from a farm background. At the time of filling out the questionnaire, 37 per cent were employed in non-farm work. Of the total group that came from a farm background, 18 per cent had left the farm within the year previous to filling out the questionnaire and 7 per cent had left from one to two years previously. (d) Litchfield county, Connecticut, workers have gone to any number of industrial centers in the State. Hartford, Bridgeport, and Waterbury are places that have attracted many former farm hands. According to the employment Service farm placement official in Hartford, industrial plants in that city took about 50 per cent of the supply of experienced dairy hands of the county during the past two or three years.

5. Nine farms out of the 46 visited reported that they are planting less corn this year, or in other ways cutting down their normal use of labor.

6. In three of the 46 cases, hay had not been cut when it should have been, because the farmer did not have the necessary help.

7. Local Employment Service offices have orders for farm workers that they cannot fill. (a) The Oneida, New York, office claimed that it could place 350 men immediately when questioned on this matter June 22nd. They said, further, that they could place at least 100 year-round experienced men at wages of \$60 a month or more. (b) The Ogdensburg, New York, office had 10 orders for year-round men that they were unable to fill. The Employment Service man at Massena, New York, reported that 500

hayng hands were needed at that time. (c) The Burlington, Vermont, Employment Service office had about 100 orders which they were unable to fill. Of this group, only about 50 to 60 represented requests for year-round men. (d) The Hartford, Connecticut, Employment Service office reported orders for 34 men to "live in" and for 244 men for "daywork". In this area, according to the farm placement supervisor, the Office could place about 150 year-round men if they were available.

8. Local surveys have been made in the counties visited by the Triple A, State Universities and other groups. They have all reported a shortage of year-round labor. The Connecticut Agricultural Defense Labor Committee, for example, received returns from 464 farms that indicated a shortage of about 30 per cent in their regular force of labor.

9. Many of the farmers and local officials of the counties visited have a strong conviction that there is a general shortage of year-round labor. County War Boards and other local groups have held regular discussions of this problem. That the farmers are equally aroused on the matter is suggested by the recent experience of the county agent of Madison County, New York. According to him, he hears a labor shortage story on about nine of every 10 stops that he makes about the county.

The net impression left by the facts given above is that there is some difficulty in each of the four counties visited. On a five-point scale indicating degree of shortage, the writer would rate all four counties as being somewhat under the mid position; perhaps, as low as the second point on the scale. This rating is made in the belief that many of the difficulties that are being experienced could be overcome by

more effective utilization of local labor resources.

B Efforts made by farmers to adjust to difficulties

Both farmers and local officials have attempted to adjust to the problems created by the difficulties herein described.

1. Wage increases

The first reaction by the farmer was probably to increase the wages he paid to his men or was willing to pay to a new man. By so doing, many farmers were able to retain at least some of their regular help. Farmers who were slow in taking this action likely lost some of their hands to other farmers in the community. The biggest operators are most dependent upon hired help, but, at the same time, often able to pay higher wages than those that are average in the vicinity. They thus attract away from the smaller farmer the help that is needed. The marginal operator or the stubborn man who is unwilling to change his rate of pay quickly are the ones who are most likely to suffer in a situation or relative labor scarcity.

2. Increased labor by operator and family

When an increase in wages was not enough to give him the number of workers to which he was accustomed, the farmer usually tried to carry on with the same size herd by doing more work himself and by calling upon his wife and children for a greater contribution of labor. Just how much family labor has increased is not known. Several local officials estimated that there had been at least a 30 per cent increase in the amount of work done by the wife. ~~This figure would vary from county to county~~ because there are different customs and traditions concerning the

proper role of the woman on the farm. In Litchfield County, Connecticut, for example, much less work is done by the wife than in St. Lawrence County, New York. In the latter county, from one-half to two-thirds of the wives even in normal times do barn and field work while in the former county less than 10 per cent has engaged in such labor. Even now a farmer in Litchfield County who has his wife do some of the heavy outside work loses status with his neighbors.

3. Further mechanization

As wages have gone up and it has been necessary to call more and more upon family help, the farmer has bought much more labor saving machinery than he had five and 10 years ago. Everywhere one goes in travelling about the four counties, the story is the same--during the last two years the number of farmers with milking machines has about doubled. Officials estimated that the farms that are milking 20 or more cows have this machine in about 50 to 75 per cent of the total number of cases. They thought that two or three years ago, the percentage was probably about 30 to 50. That their estimate might not be far from the fact was suggested by the sample of 46 farms. Eighty per cent of that group was using such a machine. The milker enables the farmer to take care of his work on cows in much less time, especially when the cows are out to pasture. One official estimated that it would take three milkers one hour to milk 25 cows by hand while the same job could be done by machine by one person in an hour and a half. With the introduction of a milking machine, a farmer might be able to release one year-round worker if several were employed or to get by with summer help if only one person had up until that time been used for the 12 months period.

Many other machines have been purchased for the first time during the past two or three years by the farmers of the four counties. Hay loaders have become quite common. Almost every farmer has a tractor at the present time. The desire now seems to be to possess a rubber-tired machine. Having a tractor of some kind, the farmer has gone along, year after year, adding equipment for it. One farmer pointed out that his father during the last world war on the same farm had to have three times as much hired help as is now the case, because of the lack of modern equipment.

4. Changes in farm management

Other adaptations made by the farmer to the present situation include reduction in crops requiring much labor, elimination of some of the non-essential work that usually was accomplished, and delayed harvesting of some of his crops. These measures, however, have not been resorted to in any great number of cases. Perhaps up to 20 per cent of the farmers might be planting less corn, potatoes, or other crops that take much hand labor. With regard to eliminating some of the usual work that is done, the farmer claims that all the work that he has done is essential and he is reluctant to give much of it up. The extent of the delay in getting essential work done is hard to estimate because it is so much a matter of the weather. What delay there has been this year, for example, in haying might be due more to the wet weather that prevailed during the spring and early summer than to any lack of the necessary labor.

5. Exchange of work and better planning of work

Two measures that have not seemingly changed much in face of labor difficulty is the exchange of labor with neighboring farmers and

extensive planning of the work that is done. Exchange of work during silo filling time is common in all four counties. Little is done in haying. The stock excuse is that each farmer wants his hay cut on the same day; that he is too much of an individualist to get together under these conditions with his neighbor for an exchange of work. If this attitude is general in the four areas, it prevents a great deal of saving of labor that thorough cooperation would bring about.

Even more important, perhaps, is the careful planning of the work that is done. The usual farmer plans in a way. He sees the essential tasks, goes after them one by one, and thinks there is no other way. There is, nevertheless, a great deal of difference among farmers in the amount of work that they can get done over the same length of time when expending approximately the same effort. This fact suggests that part of the difference is the result of planning what work is to be done and the sequence of steps in which to achieve it.

C Effort of public and private
officials to help farmers

1. Recruitment and placement of student help

The local officials whose responsibility includes helping the farmer with his labor problems have endeavored to help him mainly by tapping new sources of labor supply. In this work, assistance has been received from many private and public groups. The program that has been evolved through their efforts has rested mainly upon the recruitment and placement of high school and college youth. This group of workers has been called the Farm Cadet Victory Service in New York, the Volunteer Land Corps in Vermont and the Land Army in Connecticut. In New York and

Connecticut, the Employment Service has been chiefly responsible for the organization of the students. In Vermont, a private group of persons has taken the lead.

The Vermont Volunteer Land Corps has been better organized and probably more successful than the other two state student groups. Their success may be attributed to two important factors. After an initial period of trial and error, the Corps insisted that every applicant for farm work be interviewed by one of its representatives before being placed on a farm. In this way, the cases that obviously would not work out on a placement were weeded out at the start. A second measure that helped greatly with the success of the movement was providing field workers who attempted to adjust the boy or girl placed to the family, to the job to be done, and to the community in which he was to live. Through private subscription, money was obtained to pay the salaries of such field representatives. There were other parts of the work that contributed greatly to the success of the organization, but the two factors described above seem to be mainly the ones that distinguish the Vermont Volunteer Land Corps from the other two state movements and to account for its greater success.

Connecticut and New York tried to do a mass job in a short time. Twenty thousand students were registered in New York and between 3,000 and 4,000 in Connecticut. The enrollees were given the impression that there was an immediate and vital need for their services. They found instead that the great majority of them were not called at all and the others were called only after a long delay. Psychologically, the situation was bad. After their enthusiasm was whipped up on the basis of a

patriotic appeal, the volunteers were, for the most part, or as it seemed to them, almost neglected. Much of this failure cannot be blamed upon the Employment Service. The Employment Service claims it had adequately warned the officials involved and the students that registration did not mean immediate placement; that the main idea was to have a large number of persons in reserve in case a crop failure did threaten. In spite of these efforts and the good intentions, the situation got somewhat out of hand. Besides this difference between what the students expected and what actually happened, other parts of the program were ineffective. There must be much more careful selection and placement than the Employment Service and other organizations were prepared to accomplish in the spring of 1942. The mistake, possibly, was in thinking that there had to be haste. From the experience of this year, it would appear that it is much better to work on a smaller scale, to sift well at the beginning, and to adjust the students to their situation continuously as the program is in operation--that is, to follow the lead of the Vermont Land Corps.

Such criticisms should not be taken to mean that the work done in any state was a failure. It was not. Many placements were made in each state that helped take care of many labor difficulties. The Land Corps in June estimated that they would place about 700 students from their 2,000 applicants. About the same number of placements was expected from the Connecticut Land Army. New York had well over 1,000 students who were being used or would be during some part of the summer.

From the officials and farmers of the four counties who were interviewed, the impression was gained that, on the whole, there was a qualified approval of the student help supplied by the three movements.

A small percentage of the boys were lazy or could not stand the work that was expected from them. They left or were dismissed by the farmer. Many of the boys, on the other hand, surprised the farmer with their aptitude and willingness to work. In this connection, the important point is that the farmers were not expecting experienced help, were skeptical of this kind of assistance, and, for the most part, were willing to go out of their way to teach the newcomer. When these conditions exist, the probability of the student contributing a good measure of needed work is rather high, especially if there has been a careful sifting of applicants at the beginning.

2. Tapping other sources of labor

Other unusual sources of labor supply were also tapped besides the student help that has been described. Several localities organized groups of business men who agreed to give assistance when an emergency arose. These men were, for the most part, persons in occupations from which time could be spared. They had usually come from a farm background and knew how to do the work that might be expected from them. At the time of the survey, almost all of these groups had not as yet been called upon, but there was an expectation that they would be. In Madison county, New York, one village group had been used. The complaint made with this one venture was that they had set their wage too low and that the farmers were calling upon them instead of using what seasonal labor was still available.

An unorganized effort that parallels the willingness of business men to give some of their time to farm work during an emergency was found among factory workers. They were found in some cases taking time off in

the afternoon, using a part of their vacation, or working after plant hours on the farms of friends of theirs who were short of labor.

Madison County had succeeded in obtaining a group of nine conscientious objectors for farm work. This group had turned out very successfully. Other farmers in the community and county who heard about the matter requested similar help. The county and State officials, however, were having difficulty in getting the military authorities to send more of these objectors. The difficulty was even greater in Connecticut. Some local officials in Hartford had pushed the request for months, but were still unsuccessful in June.

A note worthy effort had been made by Connecticut University to train women and boy dairy workers. Extensive advertising had been given to both courses. The officials in charge hoped for about 25 enrollees in each course. Only 13 women were finally obtained. Such a small number of boys showed any interest that no further work was done on the course planned for them. The women responded well to the training, but only one of the group agreed to take a job on a dairy farm for the winter.

These measures taken by public and private groups is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the work done to meet the labor difficulties that existed in the three States visited. They are described as illustrations of what has been done. Only one of them, the student recruitment and placement, was done on any material scale to constitute a hopeful prospect of meeting certain types of labor shortages which may materialize during the war years.

The question may be asked whether or not the efforts described above appear to be adequate to deal with a situation of acute need of workers.. The impression given was that all of these steps taken are not enough to deal with the problem that appears to be coming up during the next year or two. The extent of the labor shortage that might occur in the immediate future needs to be assessed in order to devise better plans to meet it than have been put into operation so far.

D Prospect of shortage for
the coming year

The outlook on farm labor for the coming year is that there may develop a severe shortage of experienced dairy hands. Whether or not such a shortage occurs depends upon the number of farm hands that are called into military service and the extent of the flow of farm workers into industrial jobs.

1. Industrial pull

The following estimates of the demand for and supply of industrial labor in the areas close to the counties studied in this report have been taken from reports of the Bureau of Employment Security:

(a) It was estimated that employers in the immediate Hartford, Connecticut, area needed an additional 17,800 workers from March to December 1942. The supply was judged to be no more than 13,000 persons. This shortage, it was expected, would be even greater in 1943 when the United Aircraft Plant reached the peak of its employment;

(b) Employers in the Utica-Rome-Herkimer-Little Falls-Oneida labor market in New York were judged in April 1942 to need an additional 12,300 workers before July 1, 1943. There was an estimated

total labor supply of about 9,200 persons. This supply would not, of course, be available entirely because many of the workers would be called into military service. The pull of this force upon the supply will be indicated below in dealing with its influence upon the number of farm workers left on farms;

(c) The situation in the vicinity of St. Lawrence county, New York, was not as clear as that in the two areas described above. The Aluminum Company plant at Massena, New York, had in June 1942 just about reached its peak employment. Between then and January 1, 1943, the outlook was that slightly more men would be laid off than would be taken on. Construction workers would be laid off while plant operation men would be hired. The uncertainty about employment needs arose chiefly with regard to the prospect of the St. Lawrence seaway being started and with regard to the location of a plant in or near Ogdensburg. Even if neither of these projects were started in 1942 or 1943, many of the men of the area would be drawn into industrial employment by migrating to Syracuse, Ilion, Oneida, Rome, and other towns and cities downstate. On the whole, however, the pull of industry upon the dairy hands of St. Lawrence county would probably be less than might be expected in the Hartford area of Connecticut and the central area of New York in which Madison county is located;

(d) The only large employer located in Chittenden county, Vermont, or the immediate vicinity is the Winooski Woolen Mills. By June 1942, this plant had expanded to a point near its peak employment. From past experience, however, it would appear that plants as far away as Springfield, Massachusetts and Hartford, Connecticut, exercise some pull upon the workers in Chittenden county. From the facts given for

the plants at Hartford, it can be seen that within the next 12 months there will be some out-migration from Chittenden county.

The facts given above sum up to this conclusion. Farm hands in the counties studied will have the opportunity during the next year of leaving their present employment for jobs in industry. Such jobs would pay them much more than the farmer can well afford. At the present time, the farmers feel that \$100 a month is about as high as they can go in what they pay an experienced worker. The same worker, after a short time in a defense plant, could very likely earn as high as \$200 a month. The real question, then, becomes whether or not the farm hands will be actually attracted to such high-paying employment.

Some of the existing supply of experienced farm hands in the counties studied will undoubtedly leave their present employment for defense plant work in the next 12 months. No one can say just how many will leave. In trying to estimate the extent of the out-flow to industrial work, one should take into consideration the following reasons that may operate to retard the flow and to reduce it much below that which has already taken place:

(a) Workers who are still left on the farms have had ample time to leave for a job paying higher wages. If they were much inclined to accept such work, they probably would have gone a long time ago. That they have not gone so far suggests that there are strong reasons holding them to their farm employment and that unless the attracting force becomes stronger or the circumstances keeping them attached to their present employment become weaker they will remain where they are;

(b) A considerable percentage of the year-round help being used on farms is made up of sons of the operator. Strong family reasons now exist why these sons should remain where they are. If they go to industrial employment, the father might be so pressed for workers that he would have to sacrifice the family farm in which the sons have a strong stake. Rather than see their father put to this sacrifice and rather than lose the stake they have in the farm, a large percentage of sons may be expected to make the decision to stay with their father. In this connection, too, sons who have left may in some cases return when they find out that the help their father has depended on has left for industrial work;

(c) A return flow of farm hands from industrial jobs to farm employment has started. After several months in defense plants, former farm hands have in some cases discovered that the increased rate of pay cannot compensate them adequately for advantages they lost in coming to the city. Although probably small at the present time, this flow of farm hands back to the farm may be expected to continue and perhaps to increase slightly in the near future;

(d) If needed as much on farms as in the Service, many of the younger men would make the choice to stay where they are -- particularly if occupational deferment is granted them;

(e) More and more women will be taken into plants to handle the jobs that are open. As women are utilized, the pull of industry upon experienced farm hands might slacken -- at least to the extent that only persons with high mechanical skill will be urgently needed and will be able to command very high wages.

The position on the question of the outward flow of farm workers to industrial jobs may be summarized as follows: more farm hands will leave their present employment; departures will be at a considerably less rate than up to this time; and strong pressures will exist to keep men where they are. Although any guess as to the extent of the flow from the farms is extremely hazardous, the writer is of the opinion that no more than 10 out of every 100 of the existing supply of year-round workers will leave farm work within the next year for industrial employment.

2. Number called to military service

The extent of the pull of Selective Service upon farm workers depends upon the progress of the war. Changes in military strategy can also affect the draft demands of the military service. Up until now, it has been possible to defer almost all experienced farm help that was needed on the farms on which employed. This action has been possible because there were other groups of young men available to fill the quotas that had been set. There is some probability that the policy will be to draft men in semi-skilled occupations in defense plants before turning to experienced farm help. This policy might carry the local draft boards through the remainder of this year before turning to farm hands. By that time more younger men will have become of draft age and ready for service. There is also the possibility that legislation will have been passed authorizing the drafting of the 18 and 19 year olds. If this and other actions are taken with respect to tapping new sources for military requirements, we may expect a more liberal and general practice of farm labor deferment.

3. Conclusion

The two major pulls upon the farm labor supply that have been discussed above will probably be augmented by several minor forces that are operating or that will operate in the situation. All of these forces considered together in the light of the present balance of supply and demand indicate that the situation is sufficiently grave to call for careful planning for a crisis that might occur. Although no emergency exists at the present time and although extreme haste is not necessary to meet the demands of the immediate future, now is the time to start planning so measures are ready to meet any need that might arise next Spring.

PART IV

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALLEVIATING LABOR SHORTAGES

A Principles of action programs

Certain principles should be followed in any program that might be set up for the future. Although these principles are well known to students and planners in the field of agriculture, their repetition at this juncture might not be out of place.

1. Plans to meet labor shortages should be as simple as possible. Highly complex programs can be initiated only with great difficulty, usually are misunderstood by many people and encounter many resistances.

2. Local customs should be departed from gradually. As far as possible have these customs behind the program to strengthen it. Avoid all possible conflicts with the local ways of doing things. When certain customs stand unalterably in the way of necessary action, changes should be introduced slowly and based on an educational campaign.

3. Full use should be made of the local supply of labor before turning to outside sources. This procedure will be less expensive, will require less formal organization to achieve it and will arouse much less opposition among the local people.

4. Whatever organization is necessary should be based on local leaders and local groups. People of prestige in the community should be relied on to get the program across. Duplication of existing organizations should be avoided. If the people desired are too busy to participate actively in the program, their sponsorship should be solicited and have a voice in planning.

5. A graded series of measures should be on hand to be used according to the degree of the emergency. These measures should be flexible. As some fail, alternatives should be ready to fill the gap.

B Measures that might be taken to
alleviate anticipated or actual shortages

A suggested program of measures to be used for meeting whatever degree of shortage might arise is outlined below.

1. There should be a continued tapping of students, women, business men, conscientious objectors, Negroes and other sources that are not usually relied upon for farm labor. Among these sources, that of students will probably continue to yield the major number of new workers. In recruiting and placing these persons, attention should be given to the criticisms that have been made of the work done in 1942. Even though chief reliance will be put upon students for the bulk of the additional workers needed, every other source of supply should be utilized as fully as possible. In some cases, a great deal of work will be necessary to attract and place a particular type of labor. Women, for example, would have to be recruited by an appeal showing how much they could contribute to this work and by assurances that they would receive fair treatment from their employer.

2. Since many of the persons so recruited would be "green" hands, a training program would be helpful. How much training should be given depends upon how acute the shortage becomes. The more acute it is, the greater the necessity that new workers know at least how to milk and do some of the simpler chores on the dairy farm. The necessary skills might be imparted in a month's time. The State Universities might furnish the leadership in training programs.

3. Farmers should be encouraged to exchange labor and machinery to a greater extent than they do now. Some plan of exchange might be worked out so that farmers would see that no one individual would be given greater advantage than the others and that no one would face the danger of not getting the essential work done on time. The plan might be explained to them in terms of collective insurance. By giving up the right to "hay" exactly when they would like to and by agreeing to work along with the other persons in the neighborhood, they would gain the security of being able to get their crops in even though they were to lose one or more of their year-round workers.

4. The War Board or some other local agency should undertake to advise farmers on their use of labor. Some farmers in the neighborhood will undoubtedly be found who are less efficient than others. Although they might resent being told how to run their farm, tactful advice might be so presented that many farmers would take advantage of it. Community programs in which labor problems are discussed and in which farmers, known to make efficient use of labor, took the leading part might be the way in which other farmers could be induced to change their inefficient methods.

5. Records should be kept so far as possible of the sale of cows for beef and for other purposes and the reasons for such sales. From such records, it should be possible to determine to what extent a shortage of labor was endangering the production goals of the county. Such current information is essential when the situation becomes acute because once a substantial percentage of milk cows is sold it takes two years for replacements to be bred and developed to the point of milking.

If the records proposed cannot be obtained from usual sources and if the shortage of labor reached such a point that there was immediate danger of many sales of herds taking place, then, it might be well to make farmers register their intended sales and pertinent facts about them.

6. When the labor needs of the county or the state as a whole become very great, consideration should be given to the movement of general farm workers from places outside of the state to the areas where needed. As explained in the section on labor requirements of a dairy farm, these workers do not need to be skilled dairy hands. The ability and willingness to do general farm work would be enough. Having much of his field work taken care of by this group of laborers, the operator could devote his full time to the skilled tasks connected with the care of the herd. If workers were brought into a state in any great number, central housing would have to be provided. CCC camps, tourist places, unused school buildings and many other places that now exist could be utilized. If these were not enough migratory camps might be set up. Wherever housing was provided, the workers could be sent out each morning to the farms that needed their help. Instead of having one person go to each farm, small groups of individuals might be organized that would go from farm to farm. Collectively, they might be able to accomplish more than singly. A plan could be devised so farmers would share equally in the services of such a crew. Whatever transportation might be necessary for the movement of individuals or crews from a central housing unit or from farm to farm might be accomplished by the use of school buses, a good number of which are idle during the summer.

7. "Flying squadrons" of farm operators and workers

equipped with the necessary machinery could be organized to deal with emergency needs as they arose on individual farms in a community. Each community would have a group of individuals who were willing and able to contribute several hours a week to this work. Farmers who were well up with the work on their own farm might volunteer their services and, perhaps, those of some of the hands in addition. Other persons could be recruited from business men in small nearby towns whose work permitted them to take off one or more afternoons a week. Many such people have come from farms and know enough about the work to be done to be a great help during a period of emergency. Workers in defense plants might possibly be called upon likewise. Some of these individuals quit work about four o'clock in the afternoon. During the months of June and July, they could help with haying until seven-thirty or eight o'clock in the evening. The fact that some defense workers were helping friends under such an arrangement suggests that in time of emergency and for a short period of time they would be willing to give their labor to harvest a crop. If such groups were organized in each neighborhood, the amount of work that would have to be done by each would probably be comparatively small.

8. When a general emergency created by a shortage of labor

developed to a point that drastic action was needed, the first step might well be to stop the excessive flow of workers from farm to farm. A Board of Review could be set up to review each case of a transfer of a worker from one farm to another. It could regulate the movement of workers from farm to farm to the degree that the emergency called for. At first, only

a small percentage of requests for permission to move to another farm would be denied. The next step would be to try to iron out the difficulties that prompted the worker to seek other farm employment. When all measures had been taken to discourage movement and to rectify inequalities, the Board could refuse permission to move except in very unusual situations. What needs to be emphasized in proposing such action is that the restrictions could start on a small scale and be increased only as the degree of the emergency justified drastic action.

9. Registration of all proposed sales of herds should be required if such activity becomes widespread because of labor shortage. If the cows were found to be going to other farms for beef and if the milk production was falling off too rapidly to give the quantity needed, under proper legislative or administrative authority, the sale might be forbidden if farmers could be found to rent the cows. Very likely many small farmers in any area have facilities to take care of a greater number of cows than those they own. Lack of funds in many cases, is the reason why they have not added to their herd. They would be very willing to rent cows, agreeing to a set of provisions for their proper care. If the farmer who had the cows were reluctant to part with them on such an agreement, a way might be found for the renting or other farmer or government agency to purchase the animals.

10. A measure to be taken only when the situation was very acute is that of freezing workers to their jobs, provided adequate safeguards for farm hands are promulgated. They would not be permitted to move from farm to farm or from farm to any other kind of employment unless they had permission from the appropriate authority. Although

this action is a drastic one, it already has been taken in industry for some critical occupations in such areas of shortage as that of Hartford, Connecticut.

11. When and if the farm labor situation becomes desperate, the military authorities might be prevailed upon to stop all further drafting of experienced farm workers. If a man were not needed on a particular farm, instead of drafting him he would be required to work on a farm that could not continue in operation unless assistance were provided. At the present time, the policy of the local draft boards is to consider the case of an individual only with reference to the farm on which employed. If not needed on that farm, the boards do not pay any attention to how desperate the problem of the neighboring farmer might be. Under this proposal, when a person was found on a farm that had more than a minimum of labor, he would be required to go to some other place in the same community.

Whatever programs are set up to deal with the labor situation on dairy farms, they should be those in which many government agencies cooperatively participate. In recent years, a number of agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have gained much experience in handling problems of farm labor and are prepared to effectuate measures suggested above.

PART V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The survey revealed no acute shortages of experienced year-round dairy hands in the Spring of 1942. Some farmers had difficulty in getting all the help they would have liked to have and in a small percentage of cases there was genuine hardship in trying to get the essential work of the farm done. The difficulties will probably be greater next year. The outlook for the farm labor situation, in fact, is one of acute shortage if military needs are to be met by drafting many more dairy workers and if the shifts to non-agricultural employment continue.

One of the essential facts to consider in planning to meet successfully this shortage is that there are manpower resources in local communities which have not been utilized, as yet, to the fullest capacity. Some farmers were found to have too much labor. Other farmers were discovered to be using the labor they had in an inefficient way. There is not enough mutual help to take care of the emergency situations and to take advantage of the economies inherent in the pooling of labor and machinery.

Another essential fact in planning for this shortage is that experienced dairy hands are not needed to take care of much of the work that must be done. Persons with a general farming background could take care of the field work without training or supervision. Persons with no farm experience could be taught in a short time to do enough of the barn work so that the operator could be freed to take care of the highly skilled work in the care of the cows. With the proper organization

of the field and barn work, whatever needs for help might exist in the future could probably be met from new sources of supply such as students and women. In case of a great emergency, workers could be brought in from outside of the state to handle the situation. If the work and labor requirements on dairy farms are considered in this light, the potential supply of help that could be drawn upon in a time of acute shortage is very great and probably adequate under careful planning to meet needs.

A number of measures herein proposed have already been applied in the areas surveyed. However, their application leaves much to be desired, nor have they received the universal acceptance of dairy farmers and farm workers. The organizational deficiencies can be remedied by better planning. Greater cooperation in the execution of these measures can be expected as the emergency deepens and through appropriate educational techniques. What new legislative or administrative delegation of authority is needed to achieve the program as outlined in this report can best be decided by the officials who are entrusted with its responsibility.

What needs to be emphasized more than anything else is that the farm labor supply situation on dairy farms is potentially critical and may materialize unless there is a willingness to overcome traditional ways of thinking and acting about farm labor problems